

Ski Area Plan Hit By Krebs

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WASHINGTON — Rep. John Krebs, D-Fresno, today expressed opposition to full-scale development of Mineral King and said the area should be included in Sequoia National Park.

But Krebs stopped short of siding fully with the Sierra Club and other environmental groups which have opposed a proposed ski resort at the picturesque site.

Instead, Krebs said he plans to introduce legislation within 30 days to provide limited recreational facilities, based on "maximum public input." The bill also would place the area in the National Park System, similar to provisions of a measure sponsored by Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez.

Saying it "was not an easy decision to reach," Krebs concluded development "would not be in the best interests of the residents of the 17th Congressional District, particularly the residents of Tulare (County), who would be most directly affected by it.

"Clearly, the environmental toll which would be exacted as a result of the proposed development would far outweigh the short-term economic benefits it might bring to Tulare County."

In the 1960s, Walt Disney Productions proposed an expansive ski resort at Mineral King, which lies east of Visalia. The Sierra Club has stopped development with a series of lawsuits which are still pending.

Krebs said his opposition is based on four factors: extensive development is bound to have "irreversible effects" on the small Alpine valley; the influx of visitors, most of them driving automobiles, would increase air pollution which could harm agriculture, "the backbone of the economy;" the estimated \$23 million to \$27 million cost for an access road would have to be borne by taxpayers, and prices would be so high at the resort that most people could not afford it.

The freshman congressman said he "personally read" hundreds of letters he received. Most of them opposed development. He said he was issuing his statement after reading an environmental impact statement pub-

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ished recently by the U.S. Forest Service.

While agreeing with Miller's concept of including the area in the National Park System, Krebs said Miller's bill "does not specifically address the required balance between the need for additional recreational outlets and legitimate concerns for the environment."

He proposed to remedy this by permitting full-scale recreational facilities in line with those in other national parks.

But Krebs called for maximum public involvement in the planning process.

Miller had been promised hearings on his bill would be held this year, but it is unlikely it could become law in this Congress.

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